

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

1-19. (canceled)

20. (Currently amended) In an online network-connected computer system of the type that receives requests transmitted over a network from users and responds by providing responsive data over said network for display by said requesting users, a method of performing computer based processes to process online auction-style listings and provide associated responsive data for display, said method comprising:

recording a predetermined listing end time for an auction style listing stored in a computer memory;

receiving, from users over the network, bids with respect to said auction-style listing;  
automatically extending said predetermined end time if a bid for said auction-style listing is received near the predetermined listing end time;

sending responsive data to users over the network for display, said sent responsive data indicating at least that said predetermined end time is extended, wherein said automatically extending further extends said already extended end time upon receiving an additional bid after said end time has been extended; and

sending data over the network encouraging at least a seller to issue a direct offer to sell to the a user with the a highest bid before a listing expiration when the highest bid is less than a reserve price and the reserve price and the highest bid are close within a threshold without revealing the highest bid value to the seller, and

sending data over the network encouraging the seller to issue direct offers to sell to any bidders after ~~a listing expiration~~ said extended end time has passed.

21-22. (canceled)

23. (Currently amended) In an online network-connected computer system of the type that receives requests transmitted over a network from users and responds by providing data over said network for display by said requesting users, a method of performing computer based processes to provide data over the network relating to online auction-style listings, the method comprising:

maintaining a database of items available for auction-style listing;

receiving requests allowing sellers to specify whether items are to be listed in said database as conditional or binding transactions;

in response to user requests received over the network, generating and sending data over the network representing displays of (a) the conditional or binding characteristic of an item listing, and (b) at least some other information relating to the item;

receiving further requests representing offers to purchase the item over the network that lead to change in state of the ownership of the item; ~~and~~

sending data over the network encouraging a seller to issue a direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid before a listing expiration when the highest bid is less than a reserve price, and

sending data over the network encouraging the seller to issue offers to sell to any bidders after a listing expiration.

24. (Currently amended) In an online network-connected computer system of the type that receives requests transmitted over a network from users and responds by providing at least

data over said network for display by said requesting users, a method of providing online listings comprising:

maintaining at least one database of items listed for sale;

sending, over the network, data representing a user interface display of at least some of said items in a classified advertising listing format;

sending, over the network, data representing a user interface display of at least others of said items in an auction-style listing format;

encouraging sellers, through automatic interaction with the computer system, to select item listings and flexibly change selected item listings between said classified advertising and said auction-style listing formats; ~~and~~

sending data over the network encouraging a seller to issue a direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid before a listing expiration when the highest bid is less than a reserve price and the reserve price and the highest bid are close within a threshold without revealing the highest bid value to the seller, and

sending data over the network encouraging the seller to issue offers to sell to any bidders after a listing expiration.

25. (Currently amended) In an online network-connected computer system of the type that receives requests transmitted over a network from users and responds by providing at least data over said network for display by said requesting users, a method of providing online transaction services comprising:

storing auction-style listings in a database;

encouraging potential bidders to search through and request selective display of at least some of said database contents via messages exchanged over a network;

accepting bids from users and providing data representing at least some information concerning said bids to corresponding sellers;

sending data over the network encouraging sellers whose items have been bid upon to use the network to issue offers to sell items users have bid on while temporarily suspending auction-style listings for predetermined durations, thereby preventing other users from submitting bids on said suspended auction-style listings when corresponding unaccepted offers to sell from sellers to users for said items are outstanding; ~~and~~

sending data over the network encouraging a seller to issue a direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid before a listing expiration when the highest bid is less than a reserve price, and

sending data over the network encouraging the seller to issue offers to sell to any bidders after a listing expiration.

26-37. (canceled)

38. (Currently amended) In an online network-connected computer system of the type that receives requests transmitted over a network from users and responds by providing at least data over said network for display by said requesting users, a method of providing online auction-style listing services comprising:

storing information relating to items for sale auction-style in a computer database;  
scheduling auction-style listings and associated end times associated with said listed items;

posting auction style listings on a web page for viewing by users, said auction style listings soliciting competitive bids while concealing predetermined prices the seller will accept to sell items;

receiving, from users over the network, competitive bids with respect to said auction style listings;

in response to a bid received before the end of an auction style listing, allowing authorized sellers to accept bids and unilaterally end auction-style listings before said end times;

and

sending data over the network encouraging a seller to issue a direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid before a listing expiration when the highest bid is less than a reserve price and the reserve price and the highest bid are close within a threshold without revealing the highest bid value to the seller, and

sending data over the network encouraging the seller to issue offers to sell to any bidders after a listing expiration.

39. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 20, wherein the method further comprises automatically suspending the auction style listing for a predetermined time when the seller issues the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

40. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 39, wherein the method further comprises resuming the auction style listing when the user with the highest bid rejects the seller's direct offer to sell.

41. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 39, wherein the auction style listing includes a notice that there is an outstanding offer when the auction is suspended.

42. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 20, wherein the auction style listing automatically ends when the seller's direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid is accepted.

43. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 39, wherein the auction style listing resumes when a predetermined amount of time elapses after the seller makes the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

44. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 23, wherein the method further comprises automatically suspending the auction style listing for a predetermined time when the seller issues the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

45. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 44, wherein the method further comprises resuming the auction style listing when the user with the highest bid rejects the seller's direct offer to sell.

46. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 44, wherein the auction style listing includes a notice that there is an outstanding offer when the auction is suspended.

47. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 23, wherein the auction style listing automatically ends when the seller's direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid is accepted.

48. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 44, wherein the auction style listing resumes when a predetermined amount of time elapses after the seller makes the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

49. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 24, wherein the method further comprises automatically suspending the auction style listing for a predetermined time when the seller issues the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

50. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 49, wherein the method further comprises resuming the auction style listing when the user with the highest bid rejects the seller's direct offer to sell.

51. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 49, wherein the auction style listing includes a notice that there is an outstanding offer when the auction is suspended.

52. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 24, wherein the auction style listing automatically ends when the seller's direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid is accepted.

53. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 49, wherein the auction style listing resumes when a predetermined amount of time elapses after the seller makes the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

54. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 25, wherein the method further comprises automatically suspending the auction style listing for a predetermined time when the seller issues the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

55. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 54, wherein the method further comprises resuming the auction style listing when the user with the highest bid rejects the seller's direct offer to sell.

56. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 54, wherein the auction style listing includes a notice that there is an outstanding offer when the auction is suspended.

57. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 25, wherein the auction style listing automatically ends when the seller's direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid is accepted.

58. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 54, wherein the auction style listing resumes when a predetermined amount of time elapses after the seller makes the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

59. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 38, wherein the method further comprises automatically suspending the auction style listing for a predetermined time when the seller issues the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.

60. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 59, wherein the method further comprises resuming the auction style listing when the user with the highest bid rejects the seller's direct offer to sell.

61. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 59, wherein the auction style listing includes a notice that there is an outstanding offer when the auction is suspended.

62. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 38, wherein the auction style listing automatically ends when the seller's direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid is accepted.

63. (Previously presented) The online network-connected computer system of claim 59, wherein the auction style listing resumes when a predetermined amount of time elapses after the seller makes the direct offer to sell to the user with the highest bid.